

## Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Prevention

### Reporting Responsibilities

Staff are expected to report every instance of suspected child abuse or neglect. Since protection of children is the paramount concern, staff should discuss any suspected evidence with the principal, counselor, school nurse, or social worker regardless of whether the condition is listed among the indicators of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Child abuse as defined by the statute can be inflicted “by any person” and may include student-on-student abuse. These cases also require reporting to DCYF and/or law enforcement.

All staff have a legal obligation as district employees to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Staff are free from liability for good faith reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and may be criminally liable for failure to report where there is reasonable cause to believe that such misconduct has occurred. If there is any doubt as to whether to report a suspected incident of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, staff should resolve the matter by making a report to the appropriate authority (i.e. CPS and/or law enforcement). The following procedures are to be used in reporting instances of suspected child abuse:

- A. When there is reasonable cause to believe that a student has suffered abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any person, adult or another child, school staff will immediately report suspected child abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the intake hotline at 1-866-363-4276 Child Protective Service (CPS) within the office of the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). This contact must be made within forty-eight (48) hours.

If immediate action is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student, staff shall make a report to both CPS and law enforcement. Immediate action (a report to both CPS and law enforcement) is necessary in the following scenarios:

1. In cases of suspected sexual abuse, sexual assault, or sexual exploitation
2. In cases of suspected physical abuse, when there are visible injuries (bruises, burns, welts, abrasions, lacerations, etc.)
3. Likelihood of harm to the health, safety, or welfare of the student before the next day due to suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation

Any injuries will be observed by two staff members (nurse, administrator, school psychologist, social worker, or counselor).

Staff will also advise the principal regarding instances of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation as well as any reports that have been made to CPS and/or law enforcement. If the principal is unavailable, notification that a report has been made to CPS and/or law enforcement will be given to the counselor, school nurse, or social worker. The counselor, nurse, or social worker will inform the principal as soon as practical and within twenty-four (24) hours.

Best practice is that staff will make a report to CPS and/or law enforcement within forty-eight (48) hours of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation together with, or in consultation with, the principal and/or counselor. If principal and/or counselor are not available, staff are still required to make the report to CPS and/or law enforcement as part of their legal obligation as a mandatory reporter.

Child Protective Services has the responsibility of determining the fact of child abuse

or neglect. Any doubt about the child's condition will be resolved in favor of making the report.

- B. Per RCW [26.44.040](#), an immediate oral report will be made by telephone or otherwise to the proper law enforcement agency or CPS and upon request, will be followed by a report in writing. Such reports will contain the following information, if known:
1. The name, address, and age of the child;
  2. The name and address of the child's parents, stepparents, guardians, or other persons having custody of the child;
  3. The nature and extent of the alleged injury or injuries;
  4. The nature and extent of the alleged neglect;
  5. The nature and extent of the alleged sexual abuse;
  6. Any evidence of previous injuries, including their nature and extent; and
  7. Any other information that may be helpful in establishing the cause of the child's death, injury, or injuries and the identity of the alleged perpetrator or perpetrators

## **Abuse Indicators**

Per RCW [26.44.020](#), "Abuse or neglect" means sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or injury of a child by any person under circumstances which cause harm to the child's health, welfare, or safety, excluding conduct permitted under RCW [9A.16.100](#); or the negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or providing care to the child.

### **Physical Abuse Indicators**

1. Bilateral bruises, extensive bruises, bruises of different ages, patterns of bruises caused by a particular instrument (belt buckle, wire, straight edge, coat hanger, etc.).
2. Burn patterns consistent with forced immersion in a hot liquid (a distinct boundary line where the burn stops), burn patterns consistent with a spattering by hot liquids, patterns caused by a particular kind of implement (electric iron, etc.) or instrument (circular cigarette burns, etc.).
3. Lacerations, welts, abrasions.
4. Injuries inconsistent with information offered by the child.
5. Injuries inconsistent with the child's age; or
6. Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation.

### **Sexual Abuse Indicators**

Sexual abuse, whether physical injuries are sustained or not, is any act or acts involving sexual molestation or exploitation, including but not limited to incest, rape, carnal knowledge, sodomy or unnatural or perverted sexual practices. Indicators include:

1. Child having difficulty sitting down.
2. Child refusing to change into gym clothes (when he/she has been willing to change in the past).
3. Venereal disease in a child of any age.
4. Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital, or anal areas.
5. Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint about what is wrong at home; or
6. Pregnancy at 11 or 12 with no history of peer socialization.

**Neglect Abuse Indicators**

1. Lack of basic needs (food, clothing, shelter).
2. Inadequate supervision (unattended).
3. Lack of essential health care and high incidence of illness.
4. Poor hygiene on a regular basis.
5. Inappropriate clothing in inclement weather; or
6. Abandonment
7. Fearfulness of adults or authority figures; or
8. Revelations of highly inappropriate adult behavior, i.e., being enclosed in a dark closet, forced to drink, or eat inedible items

**Some Behavioral Indicators of Abuse:**

1. Wary of adult contact.
2. Frightened of parents.
3. Afraid to go home.
4. Habitually truant or late to school.
5. Arrives at school early and remains after school later than other students.
6. Wary of physical contact by adults.
7. Shows evidence of overall poor care.
8. Parents describe child as “difficult” or “bad;”
9. Inappropriately dressed for the weather — no coat or shoes in cold weather or long sleeves and high necklines in hot weather (possibly hiding marks of abuse); or
10. Exhibit behavioral extremes: crying often or never, unusually aggressive, or withdrawn and fearful.

**NOTE:** Behavioral indicators in and of themselves do not prove abuse has occurred. Together with other indicators they may warrant a referral.

**Interviews of Suspected Abused, Neglected, or Exploited Child**

- A. If a CPS social worker and/or law enforcement officer (hereby referred to as “the investigator”) requests to interview the suspected abused or neglected child at school, the investigator will obtain the child’s consent before interviewing the child. The investigator will ask the child if they would like a third-party person (adult) to be present during the interview. Unless the child objects, the investigator shall make reasonable efforts to include a third party in any interview if the presence of the third party will not jeopardize the course of the investigation.

The third-party will document whether the child’s consent was obtained and place in confidential file (Exhibit B). The investigator will notify the child’s family at the earliest point in the investigation that will not jeopardize the safety or protection of the child or the course of the investigation.

The CPS social worker and/or law enforcement officer shall only have access to student directory information. All other records of the child beyond student directory information may be requested with a court order.

**Requests for Information**

If staff receive a call from a CPS social worker or law enforcement officer requesting information about a child, staff will take the following actions:

1. Request and record the name of the investigator as well as their supervisor’s name.
2. Request that the investigator fax or email the information requested and a statement regarding the purpose of the request, along with a copy of their agency photo

I.D. card or official badge (in the case of a CPS social worker), or a copy of a business card (in the case of a law enforcement officer).

3. If the investigator states that the purpose of the request is in connection with its investigation of a report of alleged child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, respond to the request corresponding with the directory information listed on Exhibit C, and the Exhibit C directions to notify Principal or Designee of the request. Consult with admin when the requested information goes beyond or is outside of this list.
4. Make a record of the information that was accessed/released in response to the request (Exhibit C) and place in admin confidential file location in school building. This record of access will include the date of access/release, name of the person to whom the information was released, and a statement that the access/release was in response to an investigation of a report of alleged child abuse or neglect.

**Date: 8.14, 9.15, 12.16, 8.17, 7.19, 9.21, 8.23**